

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for sterilizing a container, comprising the steps of:  
supplying a disinfectant mist into a container;  
heating the container into which the mist has been supplied,  
5 while discharging the mist from the container; and  
rinsing an inside of the container after discharge of the mist  
therefrom.
2. The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of  
preheating the container prior to supply of the mist.
- 10 3. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein: the step of  
preheating the container comprises heating entirety of the container  
and heating a mouth portion of the container additionally.
4. The method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein: the step of  
preheating the container comprises heating entirety of the container by  
15 a hot blast which is supplied into the container and heating a mouth  
portion of the container additionally.
5. The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of  
providing a prescribed leaving time after supplying the disinfectant  
mist, before starting to discharge the mist from the container.
- 20 6. The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the step of  
providing a prescribed standing time after discharging the mist, before  
starting to rinse the inside of the container.
7. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein: a hot blast is  
supplied into the container into which the mist has been supplied so  
25 as to carry out the heating of the container and the discharging of the

mist.

8. The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein: the step of rinsing the inside of the container comprises supplying a rinsing fluid heated into the container.

5 9. An apparatus for sterilizing a container, comprising:  
a device for supplying a disinfectant mist into a container;  
a device for heating the container into which the mist has been supplied;

10 a device for discharging the mist from the container; and  
a device for rinsing an inside of the container from which the mist has been discharged.

10. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, further comprising a device for preheating the container prior to supply of the mist.

15 11. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein: said device for preheating the container comprises a device for heating entirety of the container by a hot blast which is supplied into the container, and a device for heating a mouth portion of the container from an outside thereof.

20 12. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein: said device for rinsing the container comprises a device for supplying a rinsing fluid heated into the container.

25 13. An apparatus for sterilizing a container, comprising:  
a device for supplying a disinfectant mist into a container;  
a device for supplying a hot blast into the container into which the mist has been supplied; and  
a device for rinsing an inside of the container.

14. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, further comprising a device for preheating the container prior to supply of the mist.

15. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 14, wherein: said device for preheating the container comprises a device for heating entirety of the container by a hot blast which is supplied in the container, and a  
5 device for heating a mouth portion of the container.

16. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 13, wherein: said device for rinsing the container comprises a device for supplying a rinsing fluid heated into the container.

10 17. A method for heat-treating a container comprising the steps of:  
supplying a hot blast into the container through a nozzle  
inserted in the container to heat entirety of thereof;  
heating a mouth portion of the container additionally.